

December 4, 1996

**Mid-Term Evaluation  
of  
Environmental Education and Communication Project (GreenCOM)**

**By William J. Nagle**

*(Prepared for USAID under Purchase Order No. PCE-0-00-96-00004-00)*

## **PREFACE**

The Environmental Education and Communication Project (GreenCOM) started in September, 1993. It is a \$25 million activity extending over a five-year period, FY94-98. It is being implemented through a five-year core contract (contract no: PCE-5839-C-00-3068-00) and a companion requirements contract (contract no. PCE-Q-3069-00). There is \$5.3 million in central funding and up to \$20.5 million in Mission and Regional Bureau Buy-ins. The contract includes a two-year extension option clause.

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) is GreenCOM's prime contractor. Chemonics, Global Vision, Inc., and the North American Association for Environmental Education are among its subcontractors and partners.

The purpose of GreenCOM is to adapt, use, and replicate environmental education and communication (EE&C) methods to advance sound environmental objectives of host country institutions. The activity is designed to strengthen the ability of public and private institutions in USAID-assisted countries to design, implement, and evaluate programs using state-of-the-art and to affect the knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and practices of individuals relating to environmental problems and issues.

AID/W management of the activity is exercised by the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) in the Global Bureau's Environment Center (G/ENV/ENR). Additional advisory and technical oversight is provided by the Development Communications Advisor in the Global Bureau's Center for Human Capacity Development. A Technical Advisory Committee, made up of experts in disciplines relevant to environmental education, social science, and behavior change, meet annually to advise the contractor on the research agenda of the project. At AED a project director and three other full-time key personnel manage the contract.

This mid-term evaluation of GreenCOM was carried out in Washington. The CTO made an email survey of GreenCOM stakeholders and customers, including representatives from Missions that had been served by GreenCOM, and Regional Bureaus, and the Women in Development Office.

The evaluator, who had been instructed to make the evaluation as participatory and collegial as possible, met with a number of the AID Washington staff who had been involved with the Green COM project. He also had hour-long interviews with six of the GreenCOM staff and then met with the whole staff in a half-day session. The project director, Brian Day, and his top staff wrote the sections of the evaluation report on lessons learned, recommendations for improving implementation, and future directions for environmental education and communication. There was later a discussion of a draft report that included these sections with the evaluator, the CTO, and GreenCOM's senior staff.

## **GreenCOM as Perceived by USAID Customers**

Respondents to a survey made of USAID missions that had received services from GreenCOM were--with one exception--positive in their judgment of GreenCOM's performance. They reported the services provided were within reasonable cost and efficiently delivered. Most found Green COM's reports to be of "high quality." An AID officer in Ecuador said the services were "exceptional, far above the norm." He made special mention of the "exceptional flexibility, dedication, extraordinary hard work and productivity of the TA provided by AED through GreenCOM." A response from Jordan expressed satisfaction with the contractor and said "our experiences here were that everything was handled professionally, efficiently, and effectively." He found "The ability of everyone to integrate well into the work and cultural environment of the project" especially noteworthy of praise.

A respondent from El Salvador found the quality of services to have been very good, but on the question of the efficiency of service delivery, she said it varies. She finds GreenCOM's "home support" to be too bureaucratic and not often responsive to Mission needs and requests. A colleague of hers finds the buy-in project "fine" but asks: "What has the core done for us?"

A former mission director in The Gambia found the advisor that GreenCOM provided was superb. "Both her quality and effectiveness were "extremely high."

A respondent from the Namibia mission said the services were effective "because there was some flexibility and we were allowed to have a great deal of say in regards to who the consultants were." She finds GreenCOM's newsletters and brochures to be informative and useful. "By seeing what other Missions are doing, we get an idea of how we fit into the bigger picture and get some ideas of things we might consider undertaking."

A respondent from Niger also found the constructive flexibility as worthy of praise.

Enthusiastic and positive responses came from three officers in the Africa Bureau. One, "very satisfied with performance," specifically mentioned the work done in Mali, The Gambia, Guinea, Madagascar, Namibia, and Uganda as being "very cost effective, efficiently delivered, of high quality, and very effective." He said the "proof of the pudding" came in a GreenCOM synthesis publication, "People and Their Environment." He commented favorably on the contractor's "sensitivity to client's needs," and "the lively up-of staff that make it a pleasure to deal with them." He also praised the timely production of trip reports and the "great format and editing of publications." To the question, "should USAID continue these services?", he responded, "Definitely YES, we can't afford to do without them."

A colleague in AFR found the "high quality of analyses and astutely reasoned study synthesis" to be noteworthy of praise.

The one negative response came from Malawi. The respondent was satisfied with the consultants and the product they produced but critical of what he regarded as a lack of support from GreenCOM's home office. He did not report that GreenCOM's project director offered to make a personal trip to Malawi to resolve any problems. His offer was turned down because he had not had "ten years experience in Africa."

One of the highest accolades to GreenCOM's work appears in the foreword to a GreenCOM

synthesis report, "Starting with Behavior: A Participatory Process for Selecting Target Behaviors in Environmental Programs." The foreword was signed by Thomas Geiger, Director of USAID in Ecuador and Kenneth Wiegand, Director, Agriculture and Natural Resources, at the mission. The forward begins:

"On rare occasions, we have the opportunity to participate in the development of a truly extraordinary product which promises Agency and possibly worldwide impact."

They later refer to the "world class technical assistance" provided by the Academy for Educational Development through GreenCOM.

### **GreenCOM's Staff's Self-Perception**

*(This section draws on the evaluator '5 interviews with individual staff and a three-hour discussion with the whole GreenCOM staff)*

As the GreenCOM project enters its fourth year, its staff

--is encouraged and energized by a track record that has left USAID missions satisfied with the quality of services delivered.

--thinks that it has proven that social marketing processes can be successfully applied in an arena vastly more complex and varied than previous applications in the health field and that it has done pioneer work in expanding the parameters of social marketing.

--has demonstrated that it can learn and change, most clearly seen in increased emphasis on participation and in adopting **Listening to People** as its mantra.

In a discussion of how **Listening to People** came to be so central, it was explained that the climate in which GreenCOM began was post RIO with its emphasis on strong roles for NGOs and notions such as people-need-to-play-a-role. "Listening to People" struck a vital chord. It created a context for GreenCOM that made sense. The whole development field was moving in the direction of participatory development. "We just fit in." Another senior staffer talked of a GreenCOM "mind-set" that is evolving. "The more we learned from travels to the field, we moved from a behavioral approach to thinking more about organizational management theory, including community participation. We also found the USAID Missions were positive about participation." One staff member thinks that the use of a video in Project Mesqa in Egypt was a "watershed" event. (A later discussion on an evaluation draft, attended by most of the senior staff, returned to the question of a "mind set." The statement that it doesn't yet exist seemed to have the support of the whole group.) What does seem clear is that the project director is attempting to define a "vision" for the project and is enlisting the aid of his whole staff in doing that. There seems little doubt but that "listening to people," a participatory process, and strong emphasis on gender are important pillars of whatever may emerge.

### **Research**

The Director of Research said he had come from other Communications projects using belief centered approaches. This project is different because not all changes that need to be made are individual behaviors. "We need to pull together participation, behavior, communications, and gender." He

continued:

"Behavior wasn't part of HealthCOM--it was dissemination of information . AIDSCOM added behavioral change. Now we talk about something even more different. We haven't yet analyzed the evolution, growth, development of our work. We must think about something different with three aspects:

--belief-centered approach to behavior.  
--participatory approach.  
--gender approach."

No one, within GreenCOM or outside, questions the quality of the research that has been done. (*See Annex I for a list of all research products to date.*) Lacking any negative reactions to the widely distributed products, we can assume at least a general acceptance.

The GreenCOM contract calls for six evaluations in the first five years. Only one final evaluation is listed. It was in Jordan. There was also evaluation of a newspaper supplement in El Salvador. The problem, as reported by both the technical staff and the research staff, is the difficulty of persuading USAID to include an evaluation when they are designing a GreenCOM buy-in. Unlike the technical staff which is funded by the CORE contract, research is dependent on funds from buy-ins. The research staff is concerned that funding from buy-ins may prove even more difficult in the future.

### **Information Exchange, Synthesis, and Dissemination**

The Information part of GreenCOM appears to be functioning as the contract intended. There were enthusiastic reactions to two synthesis documents: "People and the Environment: Environment, Education, and Communication in Five African Countries," and "Starting with Behavior: A Participatory Process for Selecting Target Behaviors in Environmental Programs."

Three publications were released in recent months although they were more in way of marketing tools than synthesis pieces. They were "Putting People into Policy," "Making Biodiversity/Conservation Happen," and "Fostering Sustainable Cities." Planned are three more which will be more in the way of synthesis and will draw on GreenCOM experiences. They will deal with basic education, gender, and water. Two issues of "Human Nature" have been circulated. Preparation of a Handbook looms as one of the most important publications and will involve most of the technical staff. The development of training modules is also on the long range agenda. The director of information exchange took the lead in planning for a workshop, co-sponsored by the North American Association for Environmental Education, titled "Using Communication to Make Environmentally Sustainable Development Happen." Held early in November, 1996, in a conference site near San Francisco, it drew 150 environmental educators and communications specialists and practitioners from 42 countries. There were 45 presentations on projects occurring in 24 countries and five regions.

In the general staff discussion there was widespread frustration over lack of time for discussion within GreenCOM and preparation of synthesis products. Filling the very real demands of the missions for technical help was seen as depriving staff of the time for reflection and for drafting synthesis papers. Recently, weekly brown-bag lunches were started for GreenCOM staff not on travel. These are in addition to weekly staff meetings.

## **Gender**

The Office of Women in Development (WID) in USAID's Global Bureau, has contributed to the funding of the GreenCOM project. Its objective was to see that WID issues, analyses, studies and information were integrated into GreenCOM activities. In May, 1996, GreenCOM published a paper titled "Issues in Urban and Rural Environment: GreenCOM Gender Reports," written by Mona Grieser, GreenCOM's gender specialist and a senior Environmental Education and Communication Specialist, and Barbara Rawlins of GreenCOM's research staff. The report details the project's achievements on gender from its start in September, 1993. Here are a few examples of GreenCOM gender activities:

In the Philippines, GreenCOM has helped to assure the participation of women in establishing and implementing local systems to manage coastal and forest resources. In all of GreenCOM's complex programs in El Salvador gender is integrated. One study examined the use of fuelwood by rural populations. Based on the findings of the crucially important role of women, it worked with women to promote fuel efficient stoves. "People and the Environment," a synthesis report of assessments done on Environmental Education and Communication in five African countries contains a gender chapter with results of the assessments and lessons learned. In Jordan, GreenCOM partnered with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature to develop a curriculum emphasizing water conservation for high school students enrolled in environment clubs. One finding was that more female than male teachers implemented the majority of activities of the water conservation curriculum.

Plans are underway for a three-day workshop in Tanzania with participants from a number of African countries. It will be designed to increase awareness on the part of policy makers, and NGO and opinion leaders on women's roles in land-use management. One issue of GreenCOM's newsletter, "Human Nature," will be devoted to gender issues. And, as reported above, a book to be produced by the GreenCOM Office of Information Exchange, Synthesis, and Dissemination, will be on gender.

*(Annex II to this evaluation is a list of gender activities and initiatives undertaken by GreenCOM since its start in September, 1993. GreenCOM staffers Peggy Preusch and Barbara Rawlins culled them from GreenCOM quarterly reports.)*

## **Managing GreenCOM**

The positive responses to the field survey on GreenCOM showed general satisfaction with all three years--including the second year when GreenCOM was without a permanent project director. That is a tribute to the Acting Director and to the rest of the staff who consciously took on a role of collegial responsibility. It is also a tribute to AID's project managers who took on a stronger supervisory role in that period.

For the past year, GreenCOM has had a strong project director who appears to have won the respect of his staff. The fact that GreenCOM continues to perform at a high level, that it continues to respond quickly and competently to requests from the Missions, the regional bureaus and the Global bureau reflects well on his management.

Now he is faced with some important challenges. The first might come under the heading "span of control." It has to do with how he can most effectively supervise the resident advisors and other field

staff. In the general staff discussion one of the staff said it was becoming hard to work with the resident advisors in the field. She said "they are not in step with thinking of GreenCOM/Washington." Another, commenting on local hires, said that although they bring a knowledge of the culture and great skills, they don't necessarily have the GreenCOM point of view. An obvious step--at least with the resident advisors--is to bring them to Washington occasionally for seminars and workshops. Unfortunately, a resident advisor is prohibited from using a mission's buy-in funds for such travel. More travel funds in the Core budget would help. The project director should know he faces a classical management problem. The Roman Emperor was constantly in a struggle with his far flung governors to get them to adopt and maintain a Roman mind-set. There are no easy answers. The project director would appear to be taking the right approach in his intention to involve field staff in his present exercise to win a consensus on GreenCOM's vision.

The second challenge appears easier to deal with. The project director now has a full time research director who appears quite willing to take his direction and to be a full participant in any process defining the vision of GreenCOM. It is reported that in early periods of GreenCOM the research staff operated somewhat independently of the technical staff. Apparently, what contributed to this separation was the fact that the research staff came from earlier Communications projects at AED and were supervised by a senior vice president of AED who had had long experience with those earlier projects. What resulted apparently was a two master problem and some fuzzy lines of authority and responsibility. Another factor contributing to this seeming separation was that research was dependent on Buy-ins. Its financial base was never as financially secure as that of the CORE staff. Therefore, instead of being full time salaried employees of GreenCOM, research staff billed its time to the project and worked only part-time on GreenCOM. However willing the present research staff is to be fully part of GreenCOM, it would help if their offices could be located in proximity to the rest of the GreenCOM staff. The third challenge is one of leadership through what may be rough waters ahead. In the words of the project director at the general discussion, "Downsizing of AID is terrifying. We are not sure what will happen to AID as a whole. No mission will be able to afford significantly large buy-ins." Keeping productivity up and morale high will be major continuing tasks for the project director.

### **GreenCOM Staff Perspectives on AID Project Managers**

From the general discussion it was clear GreenCOM staff members were well aware of the quality of their AID project managers and the roles they had played in staff successes. Some with longer experience noted how unusual it was to have AID managers who fully understood the contract and were prepared to give substantive help when asked. They cited Kate Barba for her deep understanding of development and Tony Meyer for his understanding of all aspects of social marketing, his knowledge of AID, and his willingness to advise on how best to deal with the system. They recognized that the fact that Tony Meyer is widely respected within AID is a major asset for GreenCOM. The staff was grateful for the marketing that both managers had done in the past and they noted that staff would have to play much greater roles in the future in the marketing of GreenCOM. Most of all, the staff was pleased that Kate Barba and Tony Meyer treated them with respect as professional colleagues not as underlings.

*(A number of the senior staff cooperated with the Project Director in drafting replies to questions on lessons learned, recommendations on contract implementation, and future directions.)*

## **Lessons Learned**

The GreenCOM staff have cited the following lessons learned:

\*There is resistance to research among some missions who see it as overly time consuming and academic. Research is not always directed by technical programming and sometimes appears to dominate. GreenCOM needs resources for research to test models or strategies across countries to get lessons learned.

\*GreenCOM activities involve many environmental problems and cultures. The Applied Behavioral Change model has been a useful framework. The project is continuing to refine it in the context of environmental issues.

\*GreenCOM is moving toward a less quantitative formative research model in response to changing program needs, low funding and time constraints. However, there isn't always a full understanding in Missions of the importance of formative research to design a program.

\*Although GreenCOM has done many operations research studies, we have done very few evaluations. There is either no interest, no money, no time or all of these combined. Evaluation issues must be raised up front with Missions when discussing buy-ins. Evaluation options may also need to be presented for them to decide which suits their interests and resources.

\*Sometimes there is funding to conduct formative research, but no follow-up funding is available to implement activities that are identified. This is true in Ecuador (recycling program) and Morocco (improving solid waste collections in poor neighborhoods). To avoid the problem of having raised expectations, some form of follow-up implementation activities should be mobilized.

\*Including persons responsible for field implementation in the design process has proved to be a successful initiative. The sense of ownership among national clients needs to be cultivated. The workshop recently conducted in Morocco is an example of a strategy to get people to "buy in" to the program through a participatory workshop.

\*Taking gender considerations seriously in our work has enhanced results. This was true in Egypt as well as in the Philippines and Jordan. However GreenCOM has not stressed this lesson when following up with Governments.

\*GreenCOM has also learned that integration of gender concerns, rather than separate WID activities with separate WID specialists works better. When WID started funding GreenCOM it had the foresight to ask that gender be integrated across all activities and not just be treated as add-on pieces. GreenCOM gender success has been amply demonstrated in its recognition by the international community.

\*USAID missions have been responding very favorably to plans for participatory approaches.

\*The best EE&C research work happens when we pair, on first visit, a research person and a



program person..

\*Technical staff are recognizing the need to marry environmental considerations with development realities. A strength of the GreenCOM project is its ability to view its mandate as supporting sustainable use. Its goal is to be very practical in its approach. This has two important "lessons learned" ramifications. First GreenCOM staff and consultants need to be very familiar with the breadth of development issues. Unlike health, environmental communication is heavily impacted by other sectors and GreenCOM consultants need to be able to point this out, even to USAID personnel. For example, in Mali and Madagascar missions have stressed school-based environmental education. But a review of country development indicators suggests that scarce EE&C funds would be better put into addressing out-of-school youth with functional EE&C messages since the majority of school-aged youths do not attend school. And those in school are already the recipients of EE information. Similarly, technical staff have noted that although urbanization, even in Africa, is increasing at an enormous pace, the EE models that GreenCOM is asked to implement respond to natural resource issues not urban environments. USAID staff need to be aware that EE&C can support a wider range of activities than it is currently being asked to do, and can support them more efficiently.

\*GreenCOM has also learned that its most valuable lessons are not in the outcomes of the project, nor in the specific successful interventions, but are more often related to "process" issues. These are the lessons learned that GreenCOM needs to focus on in the coming years and share with others. GreenCOM thinks if it can state convincingly that the level of participation by in-country clients directly influences the success of the project, it would be able to develop standards and practical guidelines that would make a significant contribution to the EE&C world and to development as a whole.

*(With regard to structural and management issues, the staff listed the following under Lessons Learned.)*

\*Help USAID Missions understand the role of the Core Contract. When a DO is being negotiated or when a GreenCOM team member is in the field, Missions have to be explicitly told what they can expect in terms of support from the CORE contract to avoid creating false hopes. For example, in El Salvador they had great expectations but felt they got nothing. In fact, the Mission refused offers of research.

\*Checking acceptable salary levels (according to Mission guidelines) for potential local staff and consultants. USAID contracts should allow more flexibility to the contractors in certain areas. This flexibility could be passed on by AED to its own staff working in the field so that we can respond to the needs of missions flexibly and rapidly (e.g., Malawi, Morocco). When the initial visit is made to a Mission and potential staff are identified, it is critical that we determine whether the Mission will deem the salary of local hire individuals acceptable. We have had a number of situations where the appropriate local hire staff have been identified during this initial visit, only to have them rejected by the Mission contracts officer.

### **Recommendations for Improving Implementation**

\* GreenCOM has learned the great value of participation, but is challenged by the extra time participation takes. This was most likely not anticipated at the beginning of the project. More funds need to be provided to the core to provide for these and other appropriate services to the missions.

\*GreenCOM should provide more core technical support so that missions feel they are getting the core "brain" working for them and not just financial management. This can only be done if the budget for the Core is increased. This support should not come just in occasional parachutes into a country (for gender visits or participation workshops), but in oversight by core technical staff on the direction, strategy and approaches being implemented. These visits should be at no cost to the country. Therefore, core travel budget needs to be expanded. The Philippines thought they had this when they signed the buy-in. They thought they were buying in to a larger project with international scope and knowledge based on all the other GreenCOM projects and not just on what was provided by the resident advisor.

\*More effort needs to be put up front in convincing Missions of the need to design programs based on inputs from target audiences. As a corollary to this, GreenCOM itself needs to adapt its research methodologies to the reality of funding and technical knowledge current today. More participatory methodologies and "quick and dirty" methods can be used instead of cumbersome traditional models. GreenCOM uses market research firms but has avoided rapid research methodologies in favor of more "rigorous" research.

\*To work with USAID today requires that we demonstrate how our activities will contribute to achievement of AID/Washington and USAID Mission Objectives, Results Packages, Indicators, etc. It is essential for GreenCOM to avoid misunderstandings with Mission personnel about the performance of our activities. Future work plans and Delivery Orders need clearly written sections on how the work under the DO will contribute to Strategic Objectives articulated by AID/Washington and the Missions

\*In light of USAID's current emphasis on procurement reform and streamlining, we should, when given authority, remove the more burdensome required approvals. An example is initial salary approval. Most contracts that been implemented since GreenCOM's no longer have this provision. The approval step has cost GreenCOM months of valuable time. Often, due to the shortage of USAID contracts staff our approval requests sit for long periods with no determination at all. Overly rigid application of salary guidelines has a demoralizing effect on incoming staff. Some are lost outright.

\*Since the reengineering of USAID and transfer of more authority to the field, the contractor has found great inconsistency in the procurement process by various Missions under the requirements contract. This inconsistency has included procedures for subcontracts, local hiring of staff, and per diem. In the Philippines, the USAID contracts officer insists on approving all local hire staff. In Egypt, the contract office wants to review none of the local hire staff as long as they are allowable within the DO. In Washington, the contracts officer wants to review those whose rate would exceed the rate listed for the TBN.

\*Delivery Orders have constantly been put at risk due to the approval time taken by USAID contracts in Washington and in Missions. We are keenly aware that these staff people are burdened with enormous work loads, but often quality E.E.&C work is jeopardized by delays in securing the approvals. The sustainability of capacity building efforts is most damaged by these delays.

\*The work load of Core staff has been increasing. This has proved a burden on the small core team. It has also led us to spend more funds to assure the work is done right. Consequently, the small core budget is stressed by having to hire more expensive staff to carry out the work. Because there is a critical mass of work to be done on a delivery order, no matter what the size, the small dollar value of many GreenCOM delivery orders has caused even more pressure on the small core staff. An obvious way to address this would be to increase the LOE and the budget for core staffing.

\*GreenCOM has had problems following USAID's strict review requirements for communication products. Often the desire of clients at Missions is at odds with USAID requirements. For example, one environmental chief at a mission wanted a set of materials sophisticated enough to be used with donors and large corporations to demonstrate possible investments in forest products. What the mission got was a two-color, limited brochure, which was the best the USAID Environment Center's publications review committee would permit.

### **Future Directions for E.E.&C**

\*More use of alternative research methodologies for formative research will be needed in the future. Greater use of PRA, current advertising research methods (e.g., PALS) would make formative research briefer, more pertinent, and with more immediate practical application. GreenCOM also needs to do research across sectors or across cultures to show "lessons learned." Such research should be subsidized from the Core and not from the requirements contract.

\*To the degree that future E.E.&C work will be done under a funding model to GreenCOM, one of two changes needs to take place. Either the funding for research needs to come from a separate fund or research activities have to be less rigorous. To the technical staff at missions current research seems too time consuming, too large, and too complex.

\*Often the perspective of the Mission staff on how E.E.&C can be used starts and stops with the notion of awareness. Social marketing is new to the environmental sector. Changing behavior may seem like too much to ask of communication and education. Because of the complicated nature of environmental issues, sorting out exactly the behaviors that need to be addressed and then implementing a campaign to reach that objective is more time consuming than the simple awareness concept with which many are currently familiar.

\*Mission staff get excited about behavior change but may not have set aside the resources to carry out a real behavior change project. Often the research activities are the ones that get cut and verification of the strategy is not possible with limited resources. For E.E.&C to accomplish behavior change within the USAID development context, more education of environmental program officers and incorporation of specific indicators will need to take place. As GreenCOM completes more research and evaluation studies, it will have the case studies and the "proof" of how it works to share with development staff.

\*One problem with a behavior change focus is the time limitation. It simply is not possible to talk about "behavior change" when there is only a few months for a campaign and relatively little structural or capacity building activities. People at USAID who understand research consider it unreasonable to talk about "behavior change" in such a short time. However, we can look at the necessary "process" steps that would indicate trends and provide proof over time. Right now our "proof" is determined by the degree to which we perceive behavior change dictated by our own models in a short span of time. We need to help missions understand this change in emphasis from quantitative indicators to qualitative determinants of success (while keeping on balance with selected key quantitative indicators) outcome of environmental education efforts. Few would disagree that people need a basic understanding of the environment. This is an important goal of an E.E. program. This is a reasonable charge for a public school system. Yet there is also an important need for education and communication programs to change behaviors at the household

and community levels. Should school E&E programs be expected to change behavior? How does one consciously raise awareness and provide information without running the risk of exposing the need for behavior change?

\*Somewhat parallel to this tension is the more philosophical conflict between the goal of E&E to teach problem solving and decision making skills (potential source for social change) on one hand, and the need for control and maintaining the status quo by the power structure in a community or nation. Often schools appear more interested in promoting the status quo. For this reason, some would argue, schools can never accomplish good environmental education. Yet, around the world environmental education efforts are based in the school either as formal or non-formal curriculum. Is it enough to merely raise awareness and provide information? We think not. Will educators discover how to develop a skills-based curriculum that promotes problem solving skills without threatening the community leadership? Maybe. We are looking for such case studies. Can behavior change efforts build enough participation into the process that it will not be seen as a U.S. cultural intervention? We hope to have the chance to find out.

\*We should be explicit about GreenCOM's role in institution building and sustainability. It is critical that the client have the institutional capacity to continue implementation. Selection of competent partners has much to do with long-term sustainability of the innovations we introduce.

## Summary and Commentary

### Summary

The survey made of USAID missions and other AID officers familiar with services GreenCOM had delivered were for the most part enthusiastic about GreenCOM performance. The GreenCOM staff, delighted with the positive results of the survey, thinks it has plowed new ground in social marketing by applying it to an area vastly more complex and varied than in previous applications taken by its parent contractor, the Academy for Educational Development. One important difference between GreenCOM and earlier communications efforts by AED is that community participation looms as significantly more important. It is no accident that GreenCOM currently calls **Listening to People** its mantra. The senior staff seem agreed that a clear GreenCOM "mind set" has not yet emerged, but most would agree that in addition to the ABC process inherited from earlier social marketing processes "listening to people," participation, and an emphasis on gender are important pillars for whatever may emerge.

The information exchange part of GreenCOM appears to be functioning as the contract intended. There is widespread frustration among GreenCOM technical staff over lack of time for preparation of synthesis products. They realize that they all must join in preparation of a Handbook as called for by the contract.

The Office of Women Development in the Global Bureau contributed to GreenCOM's funding. The objective was to see that WID issues, analyses, studies and information were integrated into GreenCOM activities. GreenCOM has been very conscientious about doing just that. A complete list of gender initiatives and activities by GreenCOM can be found in Annex II.

The Director of Research sees as his challenge the pulling together of behavior, participation, communications, and gender. Although the contract calls for six evaluations in the first five years, only one (in Jordan) has been done. The problem is in persuading USAID missions to include an evaluation when they are designing a GreenCOM buy-in. Research is dependent on funds from buy-ins for all its activities.

The positive responses to the field survey on GreenCOM showed general satisfaction for its first three years, including its second year when it was without a permanent project director. For the third year, GreenCOM has had a strong project director. It reflects well on his management that GreenCOM continues to respond quickly and competently to requests from Missions, the regional bureau, and the Global Bureau. Among the challenges he faces in his fourth and fifth year: (1) to insure that GreenCOM's resident advisors and other field staff remain in step with the thinking in GreenCOM Washington; (2) to ensure that the research staff and the technical staff are fully integrated and speak with one mind; and (3) keeping productivity high and staff morale up despite downsizing of AID and budgetary squeezes.

GreenCOM staff give high marks to their AID project managers for their substantive understanding of development, environment and social marketing, for their constant support, and for dealing with them as professional colleagues.

### Commentary

This is a good project and its staff members do good work which their customers find useful and which they find satisfying and rewarding. They appreciate that they are on the cutting edge of social marketing and that they are in a position to teach colleagues in social marketing about the complex world of environment and to teach colleagues in environmental education about communication and behavioral change. Quite unlike most AID-funded projects, they are encouraged to be reflective and to write synthesis papers for publication and for wide dissemination. Their dilemma is that the daily demands of their work afford little time for such thinking and writing

The project director and his staff realize they are behind in the production of synthesis papers. One paper, for which the project director himself will have to take the lead, is to articulate the emerging "vision" of GreenCOM. It could be published for limited circulation, but including importantly the field staff and other key actors, as a "work in progress" to be revisited and refined over the next two, or possibly four years. A second paper, to which more than one could contribute, could spell out why and how this effort in social marketing is different from earlier efforts.

One additional recommendation on the synthesis papers: they (and the Handbook chapters) will never get done by this busy staff if specific assignments with clear deadlines are not made. One approach which might prove fruitful is to have a primary author and a second person to be first reader, chief critic and perhaps eventually, co-author. There appears already a collegial spirit at GreenCOM that can have an outlet in the preparation of these papers. For the staff there can be the satisfaction that there will be a body of literature to which they have contributed that will long outlast the project itself.

The first staff recommendation for improving implementation, which makes a case for more core technical support, says such support should not just come in occasional parachutes into a country for gender visits or participation workshops, "but in oversight by core technical staff on the direction, strategy, and approaches being implemented." One could infer from this statement that technical staff other than the project director, does not now provide such oversight. Since the project director can not be omnipresent, how then is the oversight provided? One possible conclusion is that when visiting a country, a core technical staff person must be considered as a deputy to the project director and it must be clear to the resident advisor, the other field staff and the USAID mission personnel that he or she is functioning with the authority of the project director. No wonder there is now a seeming disconnect between GreenCOM field staff and GreenCOM Washington.